

Utah Women Benefit from Dramatic Improvement in Prenatal Care

Utah women are getting earlier and better prenatal care, according to a new report on state health rankings from the United Health Foundation (UHF). The state jumped from 49th to 24th place in the nation from 2004 to 2005.

The rankings are based on birth certificate data and show that 77 percent of women received adequate prenatal care in Utah in the 2005 report, a 26% increase over the adequate rate of 61 percent in the 2004 report. ([Download full report](#))

The Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) Baby Your Baby™ program has played a significant role in improving prenatal care in Utah. In 2003, Baby Your Baby launched a public service campaign encouraging women to get their first prenatal visit before 13 weeks and to see their health care provider at least 13 times during their pregnancy.

The "Lucky 13" message emphasizes the reasons regular and frequent prenatal care is important. Research shows that early and ongoing care leads to fewer serious pregnancy complications, healthier behaviors, better disease prevention and higher birth weights.

UDOH launched Lucky 13 in response to the 2003 UHF report, which ranked Utah 49th in the United States in terms of adequate prenatal care. About 4 out of every 10 women in Utah were not getting adequate prenatal care, which is defined as beginning in the first trimester and having at least 13 visits throughout pregnancy, depending on when delivery takes place.

"Research and focus groups have examined why some women in Utah do not get adequate prenatal care," said Lois Bloebaum, Reproductive Health Program Manager. "Many of the top reasons were financial barriers, and this is where Baby Your Baby™ can help."

Baby Your Baby™ provides immediate financial assistance to women who may not be able to afford prenatal care. If a woman meets income eligibility requirements, health care for her and her unborn child may be available through Baby Your Baby™ and Medicaid. If a woman is not eligible for Baby Your Baby™, other resources for financial help or low cost clinics may be available.

According to research, another reason women said they didn't get adequate prenatal care was that they didn't know they were expecting until later in the pregnancy or were in denial because the pregnancy was unplanned.

UDOH Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) research indicated that, among women who had inadequate prenatal care, 61% felt they received care as early in their pregnancy as they wanted, an indication that women may not be aware that first trimester health care visits are important.

The Baby Your Baby™ program provides basic information on pregnancy so that women know what to expect. These materials include a Baby Your Baby™ Health Keepsake book and a Web site. The Health Keepsake offers guidance on what a mother can expect during pregnancy, as well as tips for a new baby's well-child care. It also provides a place to record important health information for the expecting mother and her baby. The Web site - www.babyyourbaby.org - provides information on topics like choosing a provider, exercise and nutrition for mother and child, breastfeeding, car seat use and many more helpful subjects.

To find out if you qualify for Baby Your Baby™ assistance or for more information on other possible financial options, visit the Web site or call the Baby Your Baby™ Hotline at 1-800-826-9662.

Baby Your Baby™ was established in 1988 and is a partnership of the Utah Department of Health, Intermountain Health Care and KUTV 2News Fresh Air.